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WA-18

Outdoor Electrical Safety

According to a study by the University of Alabama's Center for Injury Sciences, June through September are the months when most electrical accidents happen. That is not surprising, given that nice weather lures people outside, and summer construction and home improvement projects are underway. These activities lead to potential interaction with power lines, both overhead and underground.

Some schools and workplaces participate in electrical and power line safety programs. This is a great opportunity to learn what to do and not to do when working and playing where electricity may be present. Unfortunately, when school is out and the weather is right for projects, this knowledge sometimes goes by the wayside.

Think about electrical safety when planning your projects and enjoying time outside.

A shovel through an underground cable, a tall piece of machinery, a television antenna, a metal ladder, an irrigation pipe, a wooden pole or a human body part that touches both the wire and ground can complete the circuit and conduct electricity. It is crucial that you look before you lift and call before you dig.

Never go near a downed line, even if you think it is not energized. Never place a ladder or antenna where it can fall into a power line. Carry equipment low enough to avoid coming near power lines. Never attach anything to a power pole. If you need to work in proximity to a power line, call us.

To prevent yourself or a loved one from becoming a victim of an electrical accident, follow these other electrical safety tips:

- Call 811 before you dig. Someone will mark underground utilities to make sure you don't come in contact with power lines, gas lines or any other utilities. One wrong move can result in death or injury from electric shock or an explosion.
- Don't plant tall-growing trees under power lines. If a tree has lines running through it, don't climb it or build anything in it.
- Stay away from downed power lines. If someone comes in contact with a power line, do not touch them. Call Klickitat PUD immediately so the power can be turned off.
- Never fly kites, toy airplanes or metallic balloons near power lines or in stormy weather. Avoid using metal or wire on kites. If your kite, balloon or aerial toy gets snagged on overhead lines, don't try to untangle it. Call Klickitat PUD at 800-548-8357.

Have a safe, enjoyable summer everyone!

Jim Smith
General Manager